

## 1898 Wilmington Race Riot Commission FINDINGS

### Political

1. The racial violence of November 10, 1898, in Wilmington precipitated an armed overthrow of the legitimately elected municipal government.
2. The organizers of the overthrow took part in a documented conspiracy. The leaders, members of the Democratic white elite in Wilmington and New Hanover County, achieved their political goals through violence and intimidation.
3. Involved in the conspiracy were men prominent in the Democratic Party, former Confederate officers, former officeholders, and newspaper editors locally and statewide rallied by Josephus Daniels of the Raleigh *News and Observer*.
4. Organizers of the coup instituted a banishment campaign, targeting political opponents, black and white, leading to the expulsion from the city of over twenty targeted individuals and a mass exodus of over 2,100 others. Consequently, the Republican power base in Wilmington was destroyed.
5. The overthrow or *coup d'état* took place within the context of an ongoing statewide political campaign based on white supremacy. The Wilmington events spurred the subsequent development of statutory basis for segregation (i.e., Jim Crow) and disfranchisement legislation in North Carolina.
6. Publication of an editorial by African American editor Alex Manly in August 1898 and subsequent reprintings by the white press stimulated public debate. The burning of Manly's press and office were the flashpoint on November 10. The mob action satisfied a perceived need for the organizers of the coup. Yet, the overthrow still would have taken place irrespective of Manly's role.
7. The events of November 10 left an unknown number of dead on Wilmington's streets. The coroner performed fourteen inquests but other evidence indicates that the total number of deaths was as high as sixty.
8. Government at all levels failed to adequately respond to the violence or to reverse the political overthrow. Troops sent to Wilmington by Governor Daniel L. Russell were ineffective in quelling the violence of November 10.